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The Met Office says 2016 is on track to be the warmest year on record since the beginning of the instrumental record in 1850. If confirmed when the final results are compiled at the end of the year, 2016 will be the third consecutive year of exceptionally-high average surface global temperatures.

All of the warmest ten years on record for global average surface temperature have occurred since 1997, according to the HadCRUT4 dataset - a series which begins in 1850.

The HadCRUT4 data for 2016 shows a current value of 0.84°C (± 0.10°C) above the average for the 30-year period between 1961-1990.

Professor Peter Stott of the Met Office, said: "Three record-breaking years for global temperature would be remarkable. The year 2015 was exceptionally warm and, like 2016, was influenced by the warm El Niño circulation in the tropical Pacific.

"As the El Niño wanes, we don't anticipate that 2017 will be another record-breaking year in the instrumental record. However, 2017 is likely to be warmer than any year prior to the last two decades because of the underlying extent of anthropogenic warming due to the increasing atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases."

The Met Office announcement coincides with the statement from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) which says preliminary data shows that 2016's global temperatures are approximately 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels. 2016 is the second year running that global average surface temperatures have exceeded 1°C in the record since 1850.

The WMO figure for global average surface temperature from January to September 2016 have been about 0.88°C above the 1961-1990 reference period. The WMO figure for 2016 combines data from: HadCRUT4 series (from Met Office and the Climate Research Unit from the University of East Anglia); NASA; and NOAA.

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